



YWCA Greenwich
Government Administration and Elections Committee
February 22, 2023

Testimony in Support of:

HB 5004, An Act Implementing Early Voting

SB 1057, An Act Concerning the Secretary of the State and Early Voting

SB 1064, An Act Concerning the Implementation of Early Voting

SI 29, Resolution Approving an Amendment to the State Constitution to Allow No-Excuse Absentee Voting

HJ 1 – Resolution Approving a State Constitutional Amendment to Allow No-Excuse Absentee Voting

HB 6693, An Act Concerning Absentee Voting

Senator Flexer, Representative Blumenthal, Senator Sampson, Representative Mastrofrancesco, and members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee:

Thank you for all you have done to protect and expand the freedom to vote in Connecticut. Your collective leadership paved the way for Connecticut voters to change the course of history in our state on Election Day, November 8th, 2022. We wish to extend congratulations to each of you—since as you know voters decided by a very strong 60% majority that Connecticut is now the 47th state to allow Early Voting.

As you undertake the work of finalizing proposed legislation to implement Early Voting—and as you prepare to vote on whether to adopt the proposed resolution to amend the state constitution to allow for No-Excuse Absentee Voting, as well as on improving the absentee ballot counting process—we urge that you:

- Pass legislation **that designs and fully funds** Connecticut's first-ever Early in-person Voting system by March, 2023 to give town elections officials time to incorporate any budgetary changes in advance of the 2023 municipal election cycle. Connecticut voters deserve a baseline of at least two weeks of Early Voting that includes weekend and evening hours—with the funded option for higher population towns to provide multiple locations in addition to the office of the registrar.
- Adopt the proposed resolution for Connecticut **to join 35 other states that allow No-Excuse Absentee Voting**—for a required second time by simple majority in both chambers during this 2023 legislative session. This cannot wait until a 2024 short session when legislative time constraints will be severe. Voters need to know right away if No-Excuse Absentee Voting will be on the statewide ballot in 2024.

- Pass legislation that allows: (1) the municipal clerk to deliver absentee ballots to the ballot counters before or at six o'clock p.m. on the day of an election; (2) **notification of voters whose absentee ballots may be rejected due to a defect so that voters can either correct the defect or vote in person**; (3) prepaid postage for the return of absentee ballots; (4) absentee ballot applications that have been completed and signed to be public records subject to public inspection.

These bills are critical to YWCA Greenwich's mission to eliminate racism, empower women, and promote peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all. Women, especially those of color, have a history of experiencing voter suppression. Many low-income women, in particular, have limited opportunities to vote due to occupational, transportation, and other economic related constraints. These initiatives combat past and present attempts of voter suppression by expanding and implementing early voting as well as allowing for absentee voting. It is important that these measures are enacted without neglecting the validity of the vote. YWCA Greenwich supports these legislative proposals, while also ensuring that voter integrity remains central to the process, as it protects our system of democracy and secures the equality of each individual vote.

We thank the committee for the opportunity to provide written testimony.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

YWCA GREENWICH
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President & CEO

Zachary J. Kyle
Gender & Racial Equity Research Analyst